



# South Central District Health

*Keeping your family & community healthy*  
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## **PRESS RELEASE – For Immediate Release**

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### **South Central District Health Announces Weeklong Event to Focus on the Importance of Influenza Vaccination**

South Central District Health today announced that it will be participating in National Influenza Vaccination Week, which will run from Nov. 27 to Dec. 1. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have organized the nationwide event to raise awareness of the importance of being vaccinated against influenza (the flu). It is especially important to be vaccinated through November and beyond, because flu season does not peak until February in south central Idaho. South Central District Health is planning clinics in several locations for Influenza Vaccination Week, as well as clinics during the month of December. To schedule an appointment for a flu shot, call your local District Health office.

“This has been a frustrating year for flu vaccine,” said Tom Machala, Director of Communicable Disease and Prevention for South Central District Health. “We expected our vaccine to arrive in September and had scheduled clinics in October and early November. But the vaccine order was delayed and we had to cancel several clinics at the last minute. Even though we, like many other providers in Idaho, have gotten off to a slow start, we feel confident that we will receive our remaining doses in time for clinics scheduled during National Influenza Vaccination Week and in December. If we make an appointment to give a shot, we guarantee that the vaccine will be available.”

As National Influenza Vaccination week approaches, 77 million flu vaccine doses have already been distributed and vaccine supply is expected to reach an all-time high. Flu vaccine manufacturers have reported they expect 110 - 115 million doses of flu vaccine to be distributed this year. This is at least 27 - 32 million more doses than have been distributed in any past season and 34 million more doses than were distributed last year.

“Since flu activity typically does not peak until February or later, November and early December are still good times to get vaccinated,” said Machala. “Getting vaccinated is the single best way for people to protect not only themselves against flu, but their loved ones as well. With the holidays

approaching, now is an excellent time to be vaccinated in order to ensure that you don't catch the flu or give it to family members who may be visiting. Adults develop antibody protection against influenza infection about seven days after vaccination. The good news is that there will be plenty of vaccine available and we are encouraging everyone who wants a flu shot to contact one of our offices and schedule an appointment."

Vaccinations are recommended for anyone who wants to decrease the risk of influenza, said Machala. However, those at high risk for serious complications from flu are especially encouraged to receive a vaccination. People in high risk categories include people age 50 years or older, those with chronic illnesses (heart disease, lung disease, kidney disease, and diabetes), pregnant women, health care personnel, and healthy household contacts and caregivers of high risk persons.

This year, for the first time, CDC is also recommending children age 24 months to 59 months be vaccinated, since they are also considered at risk for complications of flu. Previously, the recommendation was for children age 6 months to 23 months, who are nearly as likely to be hospitalized for complications due to flu as those age 65 years and older. Children age 24 months to 59 months are not as likely to be hospitalized as younger children, but are more likely than older healthy children to see a physician or visit an emergency room for flu.

"Influenza vaccination can provide protection to a wide number of people, and is an important factor in minimizing the risk and severity of flu transmission," said Julie Gerberding, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Most people recover completely from a bout with the flu, but it does cause misery for a week or more and makes people unable to work, attend school, care for children, and participate in activities they enjoy. By vaccinating a greater number of people, it will help many more to be free of discomforting symptoms and not miss out on their everyday activities."

Each year in the United States, between 5 and 20 percent of the population is infected with influenza, about 36,000 people die, and more than 200,000 people are hospitalized because of influenza complications. Since influenza is unpredictable, and different types and strains of influenza circulate throughout the flu season, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that influenza vaccine be offered throughout the influenza season-- even after influenza has appeared or begun appearing in a community.

Because influenza viruses are continuously changing, the strains of influenza virus included in the influenza vaccine are re-evaluated each year and a new vaccine must be formulated for each season. The vaccine includes three viruses, usually one influenza type B virus and two influenza type A virus strains, and each must be grown individually before the three are combined late in the production process. The

strains are usually chosen in February and the vaccine production and preparation process takes about six to eight months. Distribution of influenza vaccine begins as early as August and typically continues throughout November and December.

The viruses in the 2006-07 influenza vaccine are:

- an A/New Caledonia/20/99 (H1N1)-like virus;
- an A/Wisconsin/67/2005 (H3N2)-like virus (A/Wisconsin/67/2005 and A/Hiroshima/52/2005 strains);
- a B/Malaysia/2506/2004-like virus (B/Malaysia/2506/2004 and B/Ohio/1/2005 strains)

To schedule a flu shot appointment, contact one of the District Health offices listed below beginning Friday, Nov. 24. Clinics will begin the week of Nov. 27. For more information about influenza and influenza vaccine, visit [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu).

#### **SOUTH CENTRAL DISTRICT HEALTH INFLUENZA VACCINATION CLINICS**

*Appointments are necessary for all clinics.*

*Please call the SCDH office nearest you to schedule an appointment.*

*Clients are reminded to wear short-sleeved clothing  
so they do not have to roll up their sleeves to receive an injection.*

| <b>SCDH OFFICE</b> | <b>LOCATION</b>                        | <b>CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT</b> |
|--------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>Bellevue</b>    | 117 East Ash St.                       | 788-4335                       |
| <b>Burley</b>      | 2311 Parke Ave., Unit 4, Ste. 4        | 678-8221                       |
| <b>Gooding</b>     | 145 7 <sup>th</sup> Avenue E.          | 934-4477                       |
| <b>Jerome</b>      | 951 East Avenue H                      | 324-8838                       |
| <b>Rupert</b>      | 1218 9 <sup>th</sup> St., Ste. 15      | 436-7185                       |
| <b>Twin Falls</b>  | 1020 Washington St. N.<br>(CSI Campus) | 737-5900                       |

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